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MURDER WILL OUT.

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No. 25.

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HAROLD ROORBACH, Publisher, 9 Murray St., New York.

MURDER WILL OUT

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

FOR SIX FEMALE CHARACTERS

BY

LIZZIE MAY ELWYN

AUTHOR'S EDITION, WITH THE CAST OF THE CHARACTERS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAM OF THE STAGE SETTING, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC.

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NEW YORK
HAROLD ROORBACH
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MURDER WILL OUT.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

GRANDMA STILES . . . . . *An old Yankee Woman.*
LENA STILES. . . . . *Her Granddaughter.*
MAY TAYLOR, MINNIE SPRAGUE . . . . . *Lena's Friends.*
DINAH. . . . . *The Colored Cook.*
BRIDGET O'FLAHERTY . . . . . *Looking for a Situation.*

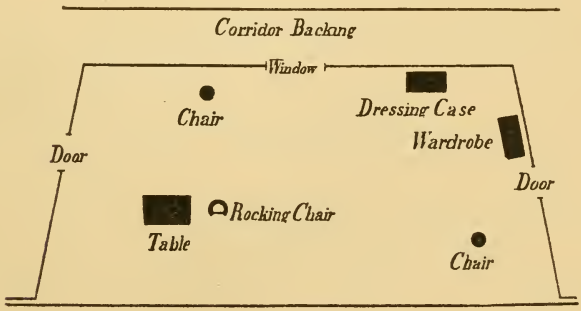
TIME OF REPRESENTATION—THIRTY MINUTES.

COSTUMES—Modern and Appropriate.

PROPERTIES.

Table; dressing-case and mirror; wardrobe; rocker; two or three chairs; articles common to a girl's room scattered about; gun for Dinah; lighted candles on table and dressing-case, and for GRANDMA STILES to enter with; masks for the girls; black domino for MINNIE; old-fashioned dress, gay colored shawl and very large old-fashioned bonnet for May.

SCENE.



SCENE.—A plain chamber. Doors R. and L. Window C. Table R., with rocker L. of it. Dressing-case L., with wardrobe L. of it. Chairs R. and L.

N. B. A set scene is not necessary to the action, and may be dispensed with, if preferred.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

In observing, the player is supposed to face the audience. R. means right; L., left; C., centre; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre. UP STAGE, towards the back; DOWN STAGE, towards the footlights.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

MURDER WILL OUT.

Scene.—LENA STILES' *chamber; doors* R. *and* L.; *window* C.; *table,* R., *with rocker* L, *of it. Dressing-case* L., *with wardrobe* L, *of it. Chairs* R. *and* L. *Articles common to a girl's bedroom scattered about.* LENA *at glass arranging her hair.*

Lena. Why in the world doesn't grandmother go to bed? Here it is nearly nine o'clock, and every night before, since I can remember, she has retired at half-past eight. The girls will not dare to come in till they see a light from her window. I wonder if I have forgotten that new waltz. (*begins to waltz before the glass*)

Enter, GRANDMA STILES, L.

Grandma. Lena Stiles, what on airth air you doin'?

Lena. Nothing but the latest waltz step, grandma. (*continues waltzing about*)

Grandma. (*dropping into a chair*) Waltz step! Set right down, child. Your father left you in my care, an' I'm goin' to see that your morals ain't corrupted whilst he is away. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? And your father a minister of the gospel, too!

Lena. (*sitting* R.) Well, I'm not a minister, and papa isn't waltzing; so where is the harm?

Grandma. The *harm!* I never caught your father a cutting sich capers, in my life. It's time you was abed too, letting nature rest.

Lena. Yes, grandmother, and aren't you sitting up late?

Grandma. Yes, an' I must go right to bed. Sha'n't I bring you a soapstone, afore I go?

Lena. No, thank you.

Grandma. Won't you want another blanket?

Lena. Oh, no indeed! I shall want nothing.

Grandma. (*nodding*) Well, I'll stay till you git to bed (*nods*) so I can tuck you in.

Lena. (*aside*) Oh, horror! Shall I never get rid of the dear old soul? (*aloud*) Never mind me, grandma, I must brush my hair before I retire; so you had better go, you are *so* sleepy.

Grandma. (*nods two or three times*) I guess I will. Law, I can't but jest keep my eyes open. **Exit, L.**

Lena. Thank goodness! I feared that she meant to stay.

Grandma. (*putting her head in at* L.) Leny, you ain't afeared to stay alone, be you? 'Cause if you be, I'll stay with you.

Lena. Afraid! Of what, grandmother? I do not want anybody, and if I do, I will call Dinah.

Grandma. (*coming in*) Well, I thought you might feel a bit afeard seeing that your ma and pa air both gone, an' no men folks left in the house. You have acted narvous and fidgety-like all day. Sha'n't I make you a little catnip tea?

Lena. Grandmother Stiles, you are enough to drive me wild! I want nothing, but to be let alone, and I will be glad if you will give me a chance to retire.

Grandma. Law, child, don't be cross! I don't believe you feel well. Does your head ache? Let me brush your hair.

Lena. No, my head does not ache. I feel perfectly well and able to wait upon myself. Now good-night, grandma, and pleasant dreams. (*gently helps* GRANDMA *out,* L.) There,—(GRANDMA *puts her head in* L.) Goodness!

Grandma. Be sure and go right to bed, Leny. **Exit, L.**

Lena. I wonder if that is the last of her for to-night? Poor, dear old soul! She means well, but *sometimes* her affectionate solicitude is very annoying.

Enter, DINAH, L.

Dinah. Does yer want ole Dinah, chile? De ole missus say dat Ise ter see does yer want anything.

Lena. Has grandmother gone to her room?

Dinah. She am dar by dis time, sartin.

Lena. Then, Dinah, you may go down and attend the door; admit whoever rings and bring them to my room.

Dinah. Dis time ob de night?

Lena. Now, Dinah, do be a dear good old soul, and not make a fuss. I mean to go to the masquerade ball to-night.

Dinah. De *wich?*

Lena. The ball. And I expect some friends to go with me. Now papa and mamma are gone to quarterly meeting and grandmother has gone to bed. So, unless you tell, nobody will know anything about it. You *won't* tell, will you? Promise that you won't, there's a dear good Dinah. (*puts her arms around* DINAH'S *neck*)

Dinah. Dar, dar! I ain't gwine ter tell nuffin. Dough if it ebber gits foun' out, I spec ole Dinah done cotch it. When am yer gwine ter git home?

Lena. Probably it will be late, but you need not sit up for me; I will take the key and let myself in.

Dinah. Oh, de recklesomness ob dat gal! Chile, youse gwine ter yer obstruction, an' poo' ole Dinah am po'ful ter sabe ye. Jess

ha'ar dese pra'ars an' stay ter hum. You're gwine ter brung ole Dinah's gray hars in sorrer ter de grabe.

Lena. Better wait, auntie, till you get the gray hairs. (*noise at window*)

Dinah. What am dat?

Lena. (*looking out*) It is the girls throwing gravel against the window. (*looking*) I can see but one, run and show her up, Dinah, and be as quiet as you can, or you will arouse grandma.

Dinah. It am bad luck youse gwine ter brung on yerself, suah fo' sartin! Exit, L.

Lena. I'll have a good time to-night. (*looks in wardrobe*) My costume is all right—I wonder if that was May, or Minnie?

Enter, MINNIE *and* MAY, L.

Minnie. It's both of us, my dear, and such an endless wait as *I've* had!

May. Yes; Minnie has been waiting for me more than half an hour, I thought aunt Abigail would *never* retire.

Lena. Did your father go to quarterly meeting?

May. Yes. And he will stay two nights. Isn't that lovely?

Minnie. Won't it give us a glorious chance? To-night the ball and to-morrow night the play. Oh, won't we have some fun!

Lena. But if we should fail!

May. Fail! Do you not know that "in the bright lexicon of youth, there's no such word as fail?"

Lena. But I feel frightened when I think of to-morrow night. I never took a part in a drama and I know, if anybody looks at me, I shall forget my lines.

Minnie. No you won't. When you get on the stage all of that fright will leave you.

Lena. The stage fright may, but the fear of detection will not leave me. If papa knows that to-night I go to the ball and to-morrow night I act on the stage, he will be *terribly* angry.

May. Well, are you going to give it up?

Lena. Give it up? No indeed! I mean to have a good time to-night any way. I have my costume here in the wardrobe, and I have provided one for you. It is up in the garret—some of grandma's clothing, but she will never know.

Minnie. Well, let's be dressing. I have my costume. It is a domino. Come, May, it is getting late and the coach will be at the corner of the street at a quarter past nine, sharp!

Lena. Come, I will show you where to find your costume and then come back and finish my toilet. Exeunt, R.

Enter, DINAH *and* BRIDGET, L.

Dinah. Dar! Yer kin sot yersef doun dar, an' wait till young Miss comes, an' Ise jess agwine ter stay too. If Miss Leny tinks

she am gwine ter 'sociate long of sich no-count trash, an' dat Ise gwine ter behold she in it, she am 'staken, dat's all. It am bad *nough*, dis trampin' off ter mastication balls, but wen it comes ter gwine long ob Irisher pot-washers I ain't agwine ter stan' it.

Bridget. Howly St. Pathrick! Shure an' what is it ails ther nagur? Oirish pot-washers indade! An' it's yersilf thart I'd be afther axin' an' who is it yez afther callin' names?

Dinah. Yer jess better mend yer manners an' 'member dat youse talkin' ter a *lady*. If yer gits ter bein' too sassy I'll jess box yer ears, dat I will.

Bridget. Howly murther! A leddy is it? An' it's a moighty dhark complexion yez have, shure! Now dry oop that bla'guarding ould black moog, an' call the misthress ter wonct, or it's mesilf as will pull ivery blissid bit of wool off yez ould black skool.

Dinah. (*rising*) Duz yer tink—

Enter, LENA, R.

Lena. For mercy's sake! Who is this, Dinah?

Dinah. Ain't it um company?

Lena. My company? No, I was not expecting a stranger.

Dinah. What am yer name, gal?

Bridget. Bridget, shure.

Dinah. Bridget Shore! Dar am a Shore family down on Front street; dey is no-count trash. Is you any 'lation ter dem?

Bridget. Divil a bit!

Dinah. *Divillybit!* Now wat am dat? Can't yer talk English?

Lena. Oh, Dinah, you do not understand her. (*to* BRIDGET) Young woman, why have you come here at this hour of the night?

Bridget. This hour of the noight, indade! Faith an' its bekase a divil a bit could I foind the phlace in the day toime!

Lena. But why did you wish to find the place?

Bridget. Howly St. Pathrick! An' how waz I goin' ter git in if I didn't foind ther phlace, I'd loike ter know?

Lena. Good gracious, Dinah, do you know what she came for?

Bridget. Howly murther, an' it's afther that yez wantin' ter know? Shure an' it's afther a sitooation I'm coome!

Lena. Oh, it's for the place that Hannah left vacant! I'll call grandma. Exit, L.

Dinah. I'd jess like ter know if ye tinks youse gwine ter lib in dis house, wid *me?*

Bridget. Faith, an' shure it's niver a bit do I want ter live wid a nagur!

Dinah. A nigger! Dar nebber wuz a nigger made so mean as dat Shore family! An' Ise quite sartin dat youse 'lation ter dem. 'Tain't noways likely dat youse gwine ter own it.

Enter, LENA *and* GRANDMA, L.

Lena. This is the young woman, grandma, who, as I understand, has answered papa's advertisement for a housemaid. Perhaps, if you question her, you can find out whether she is competent to take Hannah's place. (BRIDGET *rises and drops a courtesy*)

Bridget. An' it's a place I'd loike shure, mam, av yez plaze. An' it's me shister Norah as was afther sinding me 'til yez this blissid morning, an' it's all the day as I've been thrampin' the strates an' divil a bit could I foind yez afore.

Grandma. What is your name, my good girl?

Bridget. Faith an' me name is Bridget O'Flaherty, an' me shister Norah woruks wid Misthress Jones, what sint me 'til yez.

Dinah. Dat am a falsify, sartin! Firs' she done say she sister sent she, an' now it am Missus Jones! An' she tole me hersef dat her name am Shore.

Lena. Oh, Dinah, you didn't understand her!

Dinah. Yis I did too! I 'stand *dat* plain 'nough. *Nobody* gwine ter un'stand dat odder lingo.

Lena. I suppose, Bridget, that you have references?

Bridget. Pwhat?

Grandma. Have you a written recommendation of character?

Bridget. An' it's a poor misfortunite girul I am! (*rocking herself to and fro*) Oh, dear! (*wringing her hands*) It's mesilf as tould Norah that nobuddy would be afther takin' a sthrange girul widout a character!

Dinah. An' I shouldn't think dey would!

Lena. What do you mean by having no character?

Bridget. Shure an' I lohst me character, on the stamer, afore I'd shailed three days away from ould Ireland.

Dinah. Holy Moses! Dat am a purty gal fo' Missus Jones ter sen' ter de minister's house! Yer jess better start yersef back ter Irelan' whar ye 'longs!

Grandma. Keep still, Dinah, can't you? (*to* BRIDGET) You mean a paper written by some one and stating that your character is good, don't you, Bridget?

Bridget. All writ out so purty loike and soigned by the praist. Shure an' it's mesilf as will niver be afther gitting a sitooation widout it!

Grandma. You may stay here to-night, and to-morrow I will see Mrs. Jones. If you stay, we shall require you to see to general house work. Dinah will attend to the cooking.

Bridget. Shure, and I'd as lief tind the Gineral as anybuddy!

Lena. Have you had any supper?

Bridget. Divil a bit!

Lena. Then you must be hungry. Dinah, take her to the kitchen and, after she has eaten supper, show her to Hannah's

room. It is getting late, and I do not wish to be disturbed again to-night.

Dinah. Come along den, Bridget Shore Flattery, an' stuff yersef wid wittels as was cooked fo' decint folks. It am de las' youse'll hab ob mine cookin'! I allus did keep 'spectable company an' I don' mean ter 'sociate long ob no sich trash. I shall lebe jess as quick as ebber de missus comes home. Dat I will!

Exeunt, DINAH *and* BRIDGET, L.

Grandma. What a sight of trouble them gals make! I declare I can jest keep my eyes open! I must go right to bed. Don't set up a minute longer than you can help. Exit, L.

Lena. My stars! I shall never get ready for the ball, at this rate. (*begins to hunt in wardrobe*) Where is my mask? I must have left it in the garret. Exit, R.

Enter, BRIDGET, L.

Bridget. Howly murther! An' sich a supper for a girul as has been thrampin' the sthrates the blissid day! Cold praties, wake tay an' bannock! Och, ther stingy nagur; an' divil a bit o' sich will I be afther atein'. It's mesilf as will spake 'til the misthress shure. Faith an' here's a bottle! (*takes bay rum from dressing-case*) Something ter dhrink aze it? (*drinks*) Howly murther, an' it tastes quare!—Hark! (*listens*) an' is it that nagur coomin'? (*hiding in the wardrobe*)

Enter, LENA, MAY *and* MINNIE, R.

MINNIE *dressed in black domino and mask, May dressed in old-fashioned dress, gay colored shawl, a very large old-fashioned bonnet and a mask.*

Lena. I don't see where my mask is! Oh, May, you look like a fright!

Bridget. (*in wardrobe*) Shure, an' I'm thinkun that's thrue enough! It's a big froight yez givin' me.

May. Do I look like one, who, to-morrow night, will prowl around, with an assassin's knife, seeking the blood of an innocent old woman?

Bridget. (*looking out*) Howly St. Pathrick, it's the ould craythur hissilf!

Lena. Girls, I don't like that plot; there is too much murder in it. I'm afraid it's wicked.

Minnie. Wicked! Now what nonsense! If you get faint-hearted, we shall have to give up the whole affair. Nobody can act in the murder scene as you can.

Lena. That is just the part I don't like. That murder is horrid!

Bridget. (*in wardrobe*) An' it's a murther they's afther doin', is it? Begorra now, an' I whist I'd niver lift home for a phlace where I'd be kilt intoirely by the women folks. But it's Bridget O'Flaherty as will niver lave this cupboard 'till the murtherin' haythins gits out of the house!

May. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. So let to-morrow take care of itself, while you hurry a little and get dressed for to-night.

Lena. (*going towards wardrobe*) That I must, or we shall be the last ones at the ball.

Minnie. Meanwhile I'll tell you something to quicken your movements. Brother Dick is waiting to escort us.

Lena. Oh! (*jerking at wardrobe door*)

Minnie. I meant it for a surprise, but you were so slow—

Lena. Why, what ails this door?

May. It sticks I guess; mine does sometimes. Let me help you, (*both pull at the door*)

Minnie. You can't have much strength. Let *me* open that door. (*takes hold of door with a jerk;* BRIDGET *yells; all spring back, shrieking*)

Minnie. Heavens, there is some one in the wardrobe!

Lena. What a dreadful sound!

May. What shall we do?

Minnie. It's burglars!

Lena. After my watch!

Enter, GRANDMA, L., *with night-cap on her head, feet slipshod, a shawl around her shoulders, holding a lighted candle.*

Grandma. What on airth is the matter?

Lena. Oh, grandmother, it's burglars!

Grandma. Burglars is it? and females too! This is what comes of women's rights. I allus did say that steppin' into men's places wouldn't be no elevation to women, an' this goes to prove it. Ain't ye ashamed of yerselves, a disgracing the female sex?

Lena. Grandma, you have made a mistake, the robber is in my wardrobe. These are not theives.

Grandma. 'Pears as though they had been in *my* wardrobe. Ain't thieves! I'd like to know what you call 'em? That air is my bunnit; I knowed it the minute I sot my eyes on it. An' that's my shawl; your grandsire bought it for me the very last time he ever went to markit. It's good as new too, 'cause I've never worn it, seeing that I've worn black ever since he died. (*comes closer and looks at* MAY) An' if that ain't my weddin' dress! Here's where my things goes to, is it? (*goes* L.; *calls*) Dinah, Din-ah!

Dinah. (*outside, in a muffled tone*) Hi dar! Wat you want?

Grandma. Come along as quick as you can!

May. (*removing her mask*) Mrs. Stiles, don't you know me?

Grandma. Mary Ann Taylor! What on airth does this mean? What capers be you up to at this time o' night?

Minnie. (*removing her mask*) Oh, there is, really and truly, a robber in Lena's wardrobe!

Grandma. So *you* air in the mess! I might a known there wouldn't a been any mischief unless you was in it. 'Twon't do any good to go to *your* pa about it for he is an ungodly critter; but I shall speak to Deacon Taylor, as soon as ever he comes home. I know he will stop his darter from makin' sich a rumpus in the minister's house. (BRIDGET *sneezes*) What on airth is that?

Lena. It's a robber in my wardrobe.

Grandma. A robber!

Lena. Yes; how many times must I tell you before you can understand?

Grandma. (*running* L.) Dinah, Di-nah!

Dinah. (*outside*) Can't you wait 'till a buddy done gits she shoes on?

Grandma. Come quick, Dinah, and bring a club. There is a burglar here.

Enter, DINAH, L., *with short night-dress, petticoat, night-cap and feet slipshod. In her hand she carries a gun. All the girls scream, and jump in chairs.* GRANDMA *hides behind dressing-case.*

Lena. Put down that gun, Dinah. You'll shoot somebody.

Dinah. Dat air am jess wat Ise gwine ter do. Where am dat buglum?

Lena. In my wardrobe.

Dinah. (*pointing gun*) Den here um goes! Yer jess better say yer pra'ars in dar, 'cause Ise gwine ter shoot.

Bridget. (*in wardrobe*) The blissid saints presarve us! Oh, oh-h, Oh-h-h!

Dinah. It am dat Irisher gal! Mine golly, but I knowed she am no good.

Lena. (*getting down*) Bridget, come out of there this minute!

Bridget. Shure, an' I'll be kilt if I do.

Grandma. (*coming out*) Who is going to kill you, I'd like to know?

Bridget. The robbers, shure.

Dinah. Robbers?

Bridget. Indade it's the same.

Grandma. How many robbers are there?

Bridget. Faith, an' its the two of 'em.

Minnie. (*going* L.) There are two in the wardrobe with Bridget; I think we had better bring the police.

May. (*clinging to* MINNIE) Oh, Minnie, if you go, I shall go with you. There are so many of us that they are afraid to come out, but if you go, they will rush out and overpower the rest.

Dinah. You done stay whar ye am, an' dis chile jess fix 'em! Am ye gwine ter come out ob dar, Bridget Shore Flattery?

Bridget. An' it's divil a bit would I thry it, shure.

Dinah. Den yer can't 'spect as I'd tink mo' ob one Irisher gal den I does ob my missus' waluables; an' Ise jess agwine ter blow dat air cupboard inter kingdom come. (*raising gun*) Now, dar um goes. (*girls all scream and jump into chairs*)

Lena. Don't shoot, you will kill Bridget!

Dinah. Den she mus' come out ob dar. One—two—(*door opens and* BRIDGET *steps out of wardrobe.* LENA *and* MAY *run* L. MINNIE *goes toward wardrobe*)

Minnie. Why, there is nobody there!

Bridget. Och, ye desateful craythurs, an' it's Bridget O'Flaherty as heerd yez plannin' ter kilt the ould woman wid a knoife! An' it's mesilf as will give warning ter onct 'til ther perlice!

Minnie. Lena, we had better own it all up, and beg off, or we shall get into no end of a scrape.

May. That is so! Lena, tell your grandmother, and let me get home this time, and you may depend upon it, I'll never get into such a scrape again.

Grandma. What is all this about? What does that gal mean about knives and murder, and how came you with masks and sich, looking like a lot of house-breakers?

Lena. Grandmother, I have been a naughty girl, but you will forgive me I know, when I tell you that I am truly sorry and promise never to do so again.

Grandma. What have you done, child?

Lena. 'Tis what I meant to do, grandma. Minnie, May and myself had planned to go to the masquerade ball to-night and we took your clothes for costumes.

Grandma. Land o' Goshen! A *ball*, my Daniel's darter at a *ball*, rigged up with a mask over her face! Jest for all the world like a highway robber!

Lena. Yes, grandma, but I'm sorry and I'll never, *never* do so again, if you will promise not to tell papa or the Deacon, or May's aunt Abigail or *any*body. Now you won't tell, say you won't, that's a dear good grandmother.

Grandma. Well, if you will all promise not to attempt sich a thing agin, I'll keep still about it.

All the girls. Yes; we will!

Bridget. I'll be afther lavin' ter onct. It's niver a noight wad I be afther shlapin' in the house wid murtherers.

Dinah. Well, 'clar out den. An' it am mighty good riddence ter oncommon bad rubbish!

Lena. Can't you understand, Bridget, that it was a play that we were talking about? You have been to a theater, have you not, and seen them play murder?

Bridget. Faith, that I have; but it's a bloody mane koind of a play! Faix an' it's that wake in the knees I am that I kin jist sthand!

Grandma. What more mischief have you been hatching? You may as well own it all.

Lena. Yes, grandma, I will. The dramatic club gives an entertainment in the hall, to-morrow night. I was to take a part in the drama.

Grandma. (*holding up her hands*) My stars and garters! Lena Stiles, what depths of wickedness have you gone into? I declare you've nigh about struck me dumb!

Lena. Well, you have promised to remain dumb on that subject, you know. So let's disperse, each with a free conscience.

May. And we may thank Bridget for it. Had it not been for her, we might at this moment have been dancing in costume, but to-morrow—Ah me! Whose conscience would have been free?

Dinah. Tank dat air gal indeed! Dat Shore family nebber was berry bright, an' dis gal am de biggest fool ob 'em all. I 'clare, my ole man would jess a comed outer de grabe, 'fi had shooted anyting so mean, as dat Shore gal, wid his gun!

Minnie. Well, as Burns says, "The best laid plans o' mice an' men aft gang astray," and I think our plans have gone astray to-night. But let us rejoice that there is no harm done, and if we feel disposed to blame Bridget, let us remember that surely sometime or other MURDER WILL OUT.

CURTAIN.

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